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FIVE YEARS OF AMERICAN PROGRESS.

BY MICHAEL G. MULHALL, F. S. S.

THE Statistical Abstract of the United States, recently issued for the year 1898, enables us to measure at a glance the progress made in the last 5 years, under 12 headings.

1.—Population.

The estimated number of inhabitants in June, 1898, was 74,389,000, against 66,826,000 in 1893, and the increase was accounted for in this way:

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Immigrants | 1,397,000 |
| Natural increase | 6,166,000 |
| Total | 7,563,000 |

Immigration has fallen off by one-half, averaging only 280,000 yearly, whereas in the preceding term of 5 years (1888-93) the average was 520,000 per annum. Natural increase (that is, the excess of births over deaths), was only 17.4 per thousand, a low ratio compared with the preceding records of the republic, viz.:

| Period. | Medium Population. | Natural Increase yearly. | Rate per 1,000. |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1831-50 | 17,500,000 | 422,000 | 24.1 |
| 1851-70 | 31,100,000 | 602,000 | 19.3* |
| 1871-90 | 50,400,000 | 1,019,000 | 20.2 |
| 1893-98 | 70,600,000 | 1,233,000 | 17.4 |

The decline of immigration may be traced directly to the vexatious regulations against what are termed "European paupers," but it is not so easy to account for the diminished rate of natural increase. We must suppose either a higher death-rate or a lower birth-rate, and the former is the more probable in view of the exceedingly rapid growth of urban population, while there is no reason to suppose a declining birth-rate. In fact, to judge by

*In this interval occurred the civil war of 1861-65, but for which the rate of increase would have exceeded 22 per thousand.

European countries, the birth-rate of towns is usually higher than that of rural districts. It may be well here to observe that, according to the growth of population in the last 5 years, the census of 1900 ought to show 77,300,000 inhabitants.

2.—*Manufactures.*

Hardware industries have developed in the most amazing manner, the production of pig-iron and steel rising as follows:

| | 1893. | 1898. | Rates of Increase. |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| Pig iron, tons..... | 7,100,000 | 11,800,000 | 67 per cent. |
| Steel, tons..... | 4,020,000 | 7,160,000* | 78 per cent. |

It may be safely asserted that the world has never before seen such a development of hardware industry in 5 years. The growth of textile manufactures has, of course, been less rapid, but is nevertheless remarkable, the consumption of fibre in the various mills showing thus:

| | 1893. | 1898. |
|----------------------|---------|-----------|
| Cotton, tons..... | 526,000 | 835,000 |
| Wool, " | 210,000 | 180,000 |
| Flax, jute, etc..... | 224,000 | 255,000 |
| Total... .. | 960,000 | 1,270,000 |

Notwithstanding a decline of 14 per cent. in the weight of wool consumed in the mills we find that, so far from any increase in the imports of woollen manufactures, these have fallen 70 per cent., namely from 37 million dollars in 1893 to 13 millions in 1898. Meantime, it is worthy of observation that the consumption of raw cotton rose from 17 pounds per inhabitant in 1893 to 25 pounds in 1898, while that of wool fell from 7 to 5½ pounds, as if cotton goods were superseding woollen in some parts of the Union. Altogether, the weight of fibre consumed in 1898 was 32 per cent. more than in 1893, from which it may be inferred that the manufacture of textiles increased by one-third in 5 years.

3.—*Mining.*

The latest returns of mineral production are for the year 1897, which compare with those of 1893 as follows:

| | 1893. | 1897. |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Coal, tons | 162,200,000 | 178,500,000 |
| Pig iron, tons..... | 7,100,000 | 9,700,000 |
| Silver, ounces..... | 60,000,000 | 54,000,000 |
| Gold, " | 1,740,000 | 2,770,000 |
| Petroleum, barrels..... | 48,400,000 | 60,600,000 |

*The steel returns are for 1897, those for 1898 not being yet known.

The total official value of mining products in 1897 was 632 million dollars, against 574 millions in 1893, an increase of 10 per cent., but it will be observed that the increase as regards quantity was much greater, viz.: 25 per cent. in petroleum, 45 per cent. in copper, 60 per cent. in gold. The only item that shows a decline is silver, because the market-price fell 24 per cent. in 4 years.

4.—Currency and Banking.

The quantity of money in use has increased 315 millions in 5 years, viz.:

| | Millions of Dollars. | |
|--------------|----------------------|-------|
| | 1893. | 1898. |
| Gold | 598 | 862 |
| Silver | 615 | 637 |
| Paper | 1,110 | 1,139 |
| Total | 2,323 | 2,638 |

The stock of gold money has risen 45 per cent., while silver and paper money show but a slight increase. If we distinguish what was in the Treasury from the money in circulation the account will stand thus:

| | Millions of Dollars. | | | |
|--------------|----------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | Treasury. | | Circulation. | |
| | 1893. | 1898. | 1893. | 1898. |
| Gold | 189 | 204 | 409 | 658 |
| Silver | 493 | 515 | 122 | 122 |
| Paper | 44 | 81 | 1,066 | 1,058 |
| Total | 726 | 800 | 1,597 | 1,838 |

Taking the aggregate amount of money between the Treasury and circulation, we find that gold constituted 32 per cent. of the total in 1898, against 26 per cent. in 1893.

Banking returns show a considerable decline as regards capital, and at the same time an increased activity, the turn-over rising 30 per cent. in 5 years: the principal items stood in millions of dollars, thus:

| | 1893. | 1898. |
|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Capital | 679 | 622 |
| Deposits | 1,468 | 2,107 |
| Sundries | 963 | 1,275 |
| All liabilities..... | 3,110 | 4,004 |

These figures refer only to National Banks, the number of which is now 3,576, against 3,758 in 1893, showing a diminution of 182 banks, notwithstanding the increase of trade and population in the interval. The average dividend on banking capital last year was $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the same as in 1893.

5.—*Trade and Commerce.*

Comparing the external trade of the Union in 1898 with that of 1893, and excluding all goods in transit, we find as follows:

| | Millions of Dollars. | |
|--------------|----------------------|-------|
| | 1893. | 1898. |
| Imports..... | 844 | 587 |
| Exports..... | 831 | 1,210 |
| Total..... | 1,675 | 1,797 |

Notwithstanding an increase of $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions in population, there has been a decline of 257 million dollars in imports, viz.:

| | Millions of Dollars. | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------|----------|
| | 1893. | 1898. | Decline. |
| Imports of | | | |
| Food..... | 269 | 171 | 98 |
| Raw material..... | 218 | 189 | 29 |
| Manufactures..... | 249 | 153 | 96 |
| Sundries..... | 108 | 74 | 34 |
| Total..... | 844 | 587 | 257 |

The value of food imports has declined 36 per cent., which is the immediate result of violent changes in the tariff, viz.:

| Year. | Food Imports. | Duties. | Incidence. |
|------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| 1893 | 269,300,000 | 12,900,000 | 4.7 |
| 1898 | 170,700,000 | 40,800,000 | 24.0 |

The largest item in this class of imports is sugar, which has sustained a serious check, the importations falling from 1,680,000 to 1,200,000 tons, while the growth of native sugar is still small, hardly reaching 350,000 tons yearly. There are, meantime, other items which show a heavy fall as regards value, but in which there is no diminution as regards quantity—thus the importation of coffee last year amounted to 390,000 tons, against 250,000 in 1893, and yet the value indicates a fall of 16 million dollars. There has been a great fall of prices in the last 5 years: in Sauerbeck's table the price-level of food is 10 per cent. lower than in 1893. Hence it is evident that the imports of food have not declined in quantity so much as in value. When we turn to consider the imports of manufactured goods we are confronted with the singular fact that there has been a decline of nearly 40 per cent., although the duties in 1898 were much lighter than in 1893, as appears from the following table:

| Year. | Imported Manufactures. | Duties on same. | Incidence per cent. |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1893..... | 248,500,000 | 112,200,000 | 45.0 |
| 1898..... | 153,000,000 | 55,000,000 | 36.0 |

In view of the lower scale of duties, we should have expected an

increase in this branch of imports, but the fact is that the home manufactures of the United States are growing with marvellous rapidity, and as a natural consequence the American people takes less goods from Europe every year.

6.—*Education and Public Lands.*

Public instruction has made very satisfactory progress in the last 4 years recorded (1893-97), the average daily attendance of school-children having risen $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while the increase of population in the same period was only 9 per cent. The average attendance in 1897 was 48 per cent. of the population of school age, as compared with 45 per cent. in 1893, viz.:

| Year. | Population of School Age. | Average Attendance. | Per- centage. |
|------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1893 | 19,620,000 | 8,840,000 | 45.0 |
| 1897 | 21,080,000 | 10,090,000 | 48.0 |

This shows that the schoolmaster is making himself felt more and more every year, expenditure increasing in almost the same ratio as the number of school-children: it amounted in 1897 to \$187,300,000, being an average of \$18.70 per pupil, or 10 cents higher than the average for 1893. The schools have 403,000 teachers, that is, one for 25 pupils.

Land grants and selections, including Homestead grants and lands belonging to railroads, which were taken up by settlers in 5 years, covered an area almost as large as the island of Great Britain:

| | Acres. |
|------------------------|------------|
| Homestead grants | 28,600,000 |
| Railroad, etc..... | 19,500,000 |
| Total | 48,100,000 |

This gave an average of nearly 10 million acres taken up yearly, to be devoted, for the most part, to new farms, either tillage or grazing. The States in which such grants and selections were made were:

| | Acres. |
|------------------|------------|
| Oklahoma | 7,200,000 |
| Dakota | 6,300,000 |
| California | 3,300,000 |
| Nevada | 2,800,000 |
| Various | 28,500,000 |
| Total | 48,100,000 |

It may be well here to recall the fact that the census of 1890 showed the total area under farms to be 623 million acres. Land-grants from that time to June, 1898, amounted to 84 million acres,

from which it may be inferred that the actual farm area is about 707 million acres, the rate of increase being 30,000 acres daily.

7.—Agriculture.

The value of agricultural products in 1893 was as follows:

| | Millions of Dollars. | Dollars per Inhabitant. |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Home use..... | 3,288 | 49.50 |
| Exported..... | 615 | 9.30 |
| Total..... | 3,903 | 58.80 |

Assuming the home consumption in 1898 to have been the same value per inhabitant the total of agricultural products in the latter years would show thus:

| | Millions of Dollars. | Dollars per Inhabitant. |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Home use..... | 3,683 | 49.50 |
| Exported..... | 854 | 11.50 |
| Total.... | 4,537 | 61.00 |

This gives an increase of 634 millions over 1893, equal to \$2.20 per inhabitant. As regards agricultural exports the weight has more than doubled in 5 years, and the value has risen 40 per cent., viz.:

| | Value, Millions of Dollars | | Weight, Tons. | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------------|------------|
| | 1893. | 1898. | 1893. | 1898. |
| Grain..... | 200 | 334 | 5,900,000 | 13,250,000 |
| Provisions | 226 | 290 | 720,000 | 1,080,000 |
| Cotton | 189 | 230 | 980,000 | 1,720,000 |
| Total | 615 | 854 | 7,600,000 | 16,050,000 |

The latest details as regards tillage are for 1897, which compare with those of 1893 as follows:

| Year. | Acres Under Grain. | Crops, Tons. | Value, Millions of Dollars. |
|------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 1893 | 140,500,000 | 69,100,000 | 953 |
| 1897 | 150,300,000 | 81,100,000 | 1,122 |

The average yield was 22 bushels per acre in 1897, against 20 in 1893, the product per acre \$7.50 against \$6.80 for the said years respectively. Meantime pastoral farming showed a great falling-off, both in the number and value of live-stock, viz.:

| Year. | Number of Head. | Value, Millions of Dollars. | Dollars Per Head. |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1893 | 164,100,000 | 2,484 | 15.20 |
| 1898 | 138,700,000 | 1,889 | 13.50 |

The number of live-stock declined 15 per cent., the aggregate value 24 per cent.

8.—*Railroads and Shipping.*

Railroads appear to have sustained a serious check in the last 5 years, the annual rate of construction being now hardly one-half of what it was 20 years ago, viz.:

| | Miles Built. | Miles Yearly. |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1873-83 | 44,000 | 4,400 |
| 1883-93 | 63,000 | 6,300 |
| 1893-97 | 7,800 | 1,950 |

Receipts and net earnings for 1897 (the latest year published), show a great decline as compared with 1893, viz.:

| | Millions of Dollars. | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------|
| | 1893. | 1897. |
| Gross receipts..... | 1,207 | 1,124 |
| Expenses | 848 | 786 |
| Net earnings | 359 | 338 |

The net profit in 1897 averaged 3 per cent. on capital, against $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in 1893. Tonnage of port entries shows an increase of 30 per cent. in 5 years, viz.:

| Flag. | 1893. | 1898. |
|---------------------|------------|------------|
| American | 3,490,000 | 3,360,000 |
| British | 8,630,000 | 11,300,000 |
| Various | 4,580,000 | 7,040,000 |
| Total entries | 16,700,000 | 21,700,000 |

American shipping continues to decline, while foreign entries show an increase of 5,100,000 tons. When we examine in detail the trade of the several ports we find that New York is rapidly losing its preponderance, viz.:

| | Tonnage Entries. | | Ratio. | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | 1893. | 1898. | 1893. | 1898. |
| New York..... | 7,020,000 | 7,770,000 | 42.3 | 35.8 |
| Boston | 1,630,000 | 1,910,000 | 9.8 | 8.8 |
| Baltimore | 790,000 | 1,650,000 | 4.7 | 7.6 |
| Philadelphia | 1,620,000 | 1,640,000 | 9.7 | 7.6 |
| New Orleans | 940,000 | 1,600,000 | 5.5 | 7.4 |
| Various | 4,700,000 | 7,130,444 | 28.0 | 32.8 |
| Total | 16,700,000 | 21,700,444 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The Southern ports have gained ground prodigiously, and the Northern declined relatively in importance, which is, after all, a favorable symptom, as it indicates a better distribution of trade. Five years ago Philadelphia stood for as much tonnage as Baltimore and New Orleans collectively; at present all these three ports are equal. Baltimore has more than doubled her trade, while Philadelphia has stood still.

The merchant-navy of the United States (for the most part coasting vessels), continues to decline, viz.:

| | Tons Register. | |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------|
| | 1893. | 1898. |
| Coasting | 3,896,000 | 3,960,000 |
| High seas | 880,000 | 730,000 |
| Fishing | 90,000 | 60,000 |
| Total..... | 4,866,000 | 4,750,000 |

In the above interval of 5 years, there were new vessels built in the United States summing up altogether 880,100 tons, but the loss of vessels wrecked or broken up was 960,000 tons, and hence a diminution of 80,000 tons, as shown above.

9.—*Finances.*

The ordinary receipts for 1898 show a great falling-off as compared with 1893, and whereas there was a surplus of revenue in 1893, amounting to almost two millions over expenditure, the accounts for 1898 showed a deficit of 103 millions of dollars, viz.:

| | 1893. | 1898. |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Customs dues..... | 203,400,000 | 149,600,000 |
| Internal revenue..... | 161,000,000 | 170,900,000 |
| Post Office..... | 75,900,000 | 89,000,000 |
| Sundries | 21,400,000 | 20,000,000 |
| Total receipts..... | 461,700,000 | 429,500,000 |
| Expenditures | 459,400,000 | 532,400,000 |

The customs revenue fell 54 millions in consequence of the rapid decline of import trade already alluded to. On the other hand the Post Office receipts were the largest on record. The increase of expenditure was due to the war with Spain. The deficit above-mentioned was partly met by selling Pacific Railway stock to the amount of \$64,800,000, the rest being covered by increase of public debt.

The nominal amount of public debt rose in 5 years from 1,546 to 1,796 millions of dollars, but if the amount of cash in the Treasury be deducted, the actual debt in 1898 was only 1,027 millions, an increase of 188 millions as compared with 1893.

10.—*Summary of Results.*

There are lights and shadows in the picture, but the preceding tables show us that the United States are progressing favorably.

1. Population advances at a slower pace than ever before recorded, which is due not merely to restricted laws against immi-

grants, but also to a diminution of natural increase, arising apparently from higher death-rate.

2. Import trade has fallen off 30 per cent. in five years, partly owing to changes in the tariff, partly to a fall of prices, partly to the development of home manufactures. On the other hand, exports have risen by 400 million dollars.

3. Manufacturing industry appears to have grown prodigiously, the consumption of raw material showing an increase all round of about 50 per cent. in 5 years.

4. Agricultural interests are prosperous as regards tillage, the area under grain having risen 10 million acres since 1893, but pastoral farming seems to have suffered, the number of live-stock falling 25 millions, the value being six million dollars less.

5. Mining shows a great increase in the production of gold, copper and petroleum, while there has been, of course, a decline in the output of silver.

6. Finances have been deranged by a heavy fall of import dues and an increase of expenditure resulting from the war with Spain. The deficit of 1898 reached 103 million dollars. Public debt has risen 250 millions since 1893.

7. Money actually in circulation has risen 241 millions, entirely in gold, silver and paper money, showing no sensible change. At the same time the Treasury has had an increase of 15 millions in gold, 22 millions in silver.

8. Banking business, to judge by the National Banks, has increased 30 per cent. in 5 years, or three times as fast as population, an unquestionable proof of the general prosperity of the Union.

9. Notwithstanding the increase in mileage, the gross receipts of railroads fell 83 millions, the net profits 21 millions.

10. The tonnage of port entries has risen 30 per cent., but this has been entirely in ships carrying foreign flags. The merchant-shipping of the United States shows a steady decline.

11. Public instruction progresses steadily, the average daily school attendance increasing much faster than population. School expenditure is 3 times as much as in the United Kingdom.

12. Land grants to settlers and farmers average 10 million acres yearly, and the area under farms is at present approximately 707 million acres, of which one-third is under crops, two-thirds under pasture.

MICHAEL G. MULHALL.